

Message Text

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ACTION SP-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 L-03 INR-11 RSC-01

DRC-01 /063 W

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P R 061610Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4665

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MEICO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7943

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CO XM US

SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS AMONG POLICY PLANNING STAFFS

REF: STATE 192211

1. AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE DEPT'S POLICY PLANNING STAFF AND APPROPRIATE MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBIAN FOREIGN POLICY COMMUNITY WOULD BE MUTUALLY USEFUL AND WELL RECEIVED BY THE GOC. WE WOULD IN FACT VIEW SUCH A CONCEPTUAL EXCHANGE AS IMPORTANT IN CREATING A FEELING OF DIALOGUE AND A HABIT OF CONSULTATION, AS WELL AS IN STIMULATING SUBSTANTIVE THINKING ON KEY ISSUES.

2. THERE DOES NOT HOWEVER EXIST IN THE GOC ANY EQUIVALENT OF THE DEPT'S POLICY PLANNING STAFF. MAJOR GOC POLICY DECISIONS ARE RARELY THE RESULT OF EXTENSIVE STAFF WORK, BUT, RATHER, FLOW FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT, AND FOREIGN MIN AND, DEPENDING ON THE TOPIC, A SMALL AD HOC GROUP OF ADVISORS.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABSENCE OF ANY INSTITUTIONALIZED FOREIGN POLICY PLANNING GROUP WITHIN THE GOC, WE RECOMMEND THAT AFTER
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THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL TO THE FONMIN PER PARA 2 REFTL,
THE AMBASSADOR BE AUTHORIZED TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR SUCH CONSUL-

TATIONS WITH LIEVANO. WE WOULD PROPOSE SUGGESTING THAT THE FOREIGN MIN ASSEMBLE A GROUP OR GROUPS OF KEY GOC OFFICIALS (INCLUDING POSSIBLY SOME PERSONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR) WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM AND CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH CONSULTATIONS, AND THAT HE PROPOSE SOME TOPICS WHICH THE GOC FEELS ARE APT FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATION AMONG PLANNERS. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED TO EXPLORE WITH LIEVANO THE POSSIBLE DESIRES OF THE GOC TO INSTITUTIONALIZE A POLICY PLANNING PROCESS. WERE HE TO SHOW SUCH INTEREST, THE ROLE OF POLICY PLANNING IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION COULD PERHAPS BE A KEY PART OF OUR DISCUSSIONS.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE LONG RANGE TOPICS DESCRIBED IN PARAS 3 AND 4 OF REFTTEL, WE SHOULD (AS INDICATED IN THE FINAL SENTENCE OF PARA 4) BE READY TO ADDRESS A NUMBER OF LESS GENERAL ISSUES. THERE HAS BEEN SOME CRITICISM IN COLOMBIA, SUCH AS THAT EXPRESSED BY POLITICAL FIGURES AND EDITORIAL WRITERS AFTER THE TLATELOLCO CONF, OF THE US AS BEING WILLING TO INITIATE DESIRABLE NEW LONG-TERM POLICIES BUT BEING RELUCTANT TO LEND SUBSTANCE TO ITS PRONOUNCEMENTS BY ADDRESSING MORE CURRENT ISSUES. A READINESS ON OUR PART TO ENGAGE IN CANDID DISCUSSIONS OF THE SHORTER-TERM ISSUES THAT COLOMBIANS REGARD AS IMPORTANT WOULD BLUNT SUCH CRITICISM.

5. AMONG THE SHORTER-TERM QUESTIONS THAT THE GOC PARTICIPANTS COULD BE EXPECTED TO RAISE WOULD BE THE FUTURE STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF THE OAS; TRADE POLICIES, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO ACCESS TO US MARKETS; THE TREATMENT OF COMMODITIES (READ COFFEE) AND, DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES AT THAT TIME, THE CUBAN QUESTION. WHILE THE EMPHASIS SHOULD REMAIN ON LONGER-TERM MATTERS, WE SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE RELATIONSHIP OF CURRENT PROBLEMS TO LONG-RANGE POLICIES.

6. DEPENDING ON FONMIN'S REPLY, WE BELIEVE THAT NOVEMBER WOULD BE A FEASIBLE TIME FOR THE CONSULTATIONS. BY THAT TIME, THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE FOR THREE MONTHS; THE DOMESTIC PROGRAM, WHICH IS THEIR PRIORITY CONCERN, SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY IN TRAIN TO ALLOW KEY GOC FIGURES TO DEVOTE GREATER ATTENTION TO FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS. THE TIMING WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL IN TERMS OF PROBING COLOMBIAN THOUGHTS
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ON THE EVE OF THE DECEMBER MEETING OF LA CHIEN EL STATE IN

LIMA. A VISIT OF TWO OR THREE DAYS WOULD BE ADEQUATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PLANNING MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BOGOTA07943
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740248-0209
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740970/aaaachei.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SP
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 192211
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 SEP 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONSULTATIONS AMONG POLICY PLANNING STAFFS
TAGS: PFOR, CO, XM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005